

A WEEKLY INFORMATION DIGEST

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Year-end round-up, forecast

REVIEW AND PREVIEW: WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The Hungarian situation appears to be the development that most directly affected the whole life and activity of the World Council of Churches in 1956.

Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, executive secretary of the New York office of the World Council of Churches, in a year-end round-up and forecast of events in 1957, recalled that the meeting of the ecumenical body's Central Committee in Hungary in August was the first time any meeting of the Council had been held in Eastern Europe.

At the Central Committee meeting announcement was made by chairman Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, president of the United Lutheran Church, of the negotiations which had been underway during the course of the meeting to reinstate Hungarian Lutheran Bishop Lajos Ordass, falsely accused and imprisoned by the Communist government. Bishop Ordass was re-instated by both the government and the Hungarian Lutheran Church.

"A few weeks after the meeting, the struggle for freedom from Soviet domination broke out. The subsequent flight of refugees from Hungary presented one of the sharpest challenges the Council has had to face," he says.

The way in which the emergency was met provided "a convincing illustration of what it means to have an instrument which can unite the churches for needed service in any part of the world," Dr. Cavert commented.

By the end of 1956 there were 160 workers attached to the Service to Refugees of the World Council of Churches working in Austria. Gifts of Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox churches around the world which make up the W.C.C. had enabled the Council to

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take a major part in the reception and resettlement of the Hungarian refugees.

Officials of the Division of Inter-church Aid and Service to Refugees of the W.C.C. estimate that total resettlement figures for 1956 will be around 30,000. A record breaking figure of 19,000 had already been hit in November when the Hungarian influx began. Between 3000 and 4000 Hungarian refugees were moved in the last two months. Acceleration of immigration to the United States was a result of the deadline on this nation's Refugee Relief Act. Attempts were made to move as many people as possible before the expiration of the act on Dec. 31, 1956.

Focus on U.S. in 1957

"In prospect it appears that while the task of relocating and resettling approximately 35,000 of the Hungarian refugees will be a main responsibility of the World Council of Churches in 1957, the member churches in the U.S.A. will be illustrating another very different type of service," Dr. Cavert says.

The first major Faith and Order Conference to be held on the North American continent will take place at Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, September 3-10, 1957. Under the sponsorship of the U.S. Conference for the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and the Canadian Council of Churches, the conference has as its central theme, "The Nature of the Unity We Seek".

Ecumenical conversations -- study groups composed of members of different denominations -- are underway in some 300 local communities in more than thirty states as groups across the nation prepare for the Oberlin conference.

The 90-member Central Committee of the World Council of Churches will meet in the United States in 1957. The policy-making body is scheduled to convene at Yale University Divinity School, July 30-August 7. Midway between the 1954 world Assembly held in Evanston, Illinois, and the 1960 Assembly scheduled for Asia, this meeting of the Committee will be an important one.

In conjunction with the meeting of the Central Committee and the presence of world Christian leaders in the U.S., a number of conferences and committees will take place in this country during the summer months. A series of ecumenical institutes arranged with the cooperation of theological seminaries, will be held in key areas in the United States and Canada. Ecumenical leaders from many nations will take part in special institutes or summer schools planned for Boston; Chicago; Indianapolis; Dallas; Madison, New Jersey; London, Ontario; Toronto; Edmonton; and Saskatoon.

International Affairs

The tenth anniversary of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, a joint agency of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council, was observed in August, 1956. Formed at Girton College, Cambridge, England, the CCIA in the first decade of its existence has been successful in registering Christian concern where it counts. In its daily witness at the United Nations, intergovernmental conferences, and specialized agencies, officers of the Commission present the concerns of the churches.

But 1956 was hardly a year in which the CCIA could spend much time looking back. Dr. O. Frederick Nolde of New York and Philadelphia, director; and Sir Kenneth Grubb, London, chairman; in conversations with leaders in London and New York reiterated their stand that the United Kingdom should formally acknowledge the right of the people of Cyprus to self-determination. They also said that "in face of the total international situation the people of Cyprus should accept a period of progressive self-government leading up to the exercise of self-determination."

The CCIA suggested a four-point program which included the recall of Archbishop Makarios, preparation of a draft constitution, an assurance on the part of the Cypriot leaders that violence and terrorism would be discouraged. Representations were made to the United Nations, Greek Mission to the UN, the London representative of the Cyprus ethnarchy, and the Secretary of States for the Colonies.

This formula of investigation of the issues and presentation of possible solution to individuals and governments involved was followed in other tense international situations.

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The World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council jointly sponsored a conference on the problems of Arab refugees in Beirut, Lebanon, in May, 1956. The conference attended by more than sixty church leaders from the U.S., Australia, Europe, and Asia warned that the situation of 900,000 homeless Arab refugees "creates a serious problem not only for the peace of the Middle East but in the world." A statement issued by the conference pointed out that the situation had deteriorated rather than improved since the first WCC-IMC conference on Arab refugees.

A statement issued by Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, U.S.A., chairman of the W.C.C. Central Committee; Dr. Ernest A. Payne, Great Britain, vice-chairman; and Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, Geneva, general secretary of the W.C.C.; at the time of the crisis in the Suez area reminded the churches of what had been said at the 1954 W.C.C. Assembly at Evanston.

"No nation in an international dispute has the right to be the sole judge in its own cause," it cited. The statement also stressed the message of the Evanston Assembly where the churches call upon nations "to pledge that they will refrain from the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity of any state", and where they reaffirm that "any measures to deter or combat aggression should conform to the requirements of the United Nations charter."

Progress on Rapid Social Change Study

The appointment of three new staff members to assist with the study of Christian Responsibility in Areas of Rapid Social Change gave impetus to the project of the Division of Studies. The three-year study, made possible by a grant from John D. Rockefeller, Jr., deals with specific ways in which the churches respond to social change. A supplementary grant has been made by the Phelps-Stokes fund to extend the African phase of the study.

An American of Japanese descent, an Indian, and an African were added to the World Council of Churches staff to undertake special study in connection with the project. They are the Rev. Daisuke Kitagawa, U.S.A.; the Rev. M. M. Thomas, India; and Dr. John Karefa-Smart, Sierre Leone.

In 1957, Dr. Cavert says, special attention will be given to the study in the U.S.A. Plans for the assignment of staff responsibility and study topics for the U.S.A. will be announced soon.

Mission and the World Council of Churches

The missionary concern as it is linked with the World Council of Churches will be a major topic of discussion again in 1957. At the discussions both in the administrative Committee and at the annual consultation of the Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, "interchurch aid and mission" came in for close study. The consultation which brought 200 church leaders from many parts of the world to Les Rasses, Switzerland, in June, 1956, was a prelude to a bigger discussion.

The event that brought into sharp focus the relation between the W.C.C. and missionary forces took place at Galyateto, Hungary, at the meeting of the Central Committee and earlier at Joint Committee of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council at Herrenalb in Germany.

The Central Committee of the W.C.C. voted to consider integration with the International Missionary Council. A proposal put forth by the Joint Committee of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council looked toward integration by 1960.

Methods of achieving integration will be considered at the next meeting of the Central Committee at Yale University Divinity School in August and by the I.M.C. when it meets at Christmas-time, 1957, on the Gold Coast.

"Two objectives must be met in bringing this about," Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, chairman of the Joint Committee of the two bodies, declared. "First the convictions of the international missionary movement and the sense of mission must be woven into the total general structure of the World Council of Churches."

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"Second, all the present life and work of the International Missionary Council must be brought into the structure of the World Council of Churches, but in such a fashion that the leaders of the missionary movement can be assured that no existing work of the International Missionary Council will be sacrificed," said Dr. Van Dusen, who is president of Union Theological Seminary in New York.

East Asia

Churches in East Asia will come together March 18-27, 1957, at Prapat, Sumatra, on the banks of Lake Toba, for a meeting to determine their future relationship to the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. Helping to make arrangements for the conference is Mr. Kyaw Than, a young Burmese Christian leader, who has been serving the World Student Christian Federation as an associate general secretary.

Mr. Kyaw Than was appointed acting joint East Asia Secretary for the W.C.C.-I.M.C. for one year from the time he left his work with the Federation. The former secretary for East Asia was Bishop Rajah Manikam.

The representative conference of Asian churchmen from member churches of the W.C.C. and national Christian councils -- from Pakistan in the west to Japan in the east -- will concentrate on "The Common Evangelistic Task of the Churches in East Asia". There will be consultants from I.M.C. and W.C.C., national missionary councils, and observers from non-member churches.

A review of the work of the east Asia secretariat of the I.M.C.-W.C.C. is scheduled. The Asian churchmen will also forge plans for the kind of help the Asian churches need from the two agencies in their Christian witness in east Asia.

Exchange between churches in Asia, foreign missions and indigenous churches, new patterns of evangelistic outreach in Asia are some of the subjects which have been mentioned for discussion at the meeting. The conference will discuss the development of a permanent ecumenical council of that region.

Ecumenical Institute's Tenth Anniversary

The Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches at Bossey, Switzerland, observed its tenth anniversary at the opening of the 1956-57 session of the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies.

The United States with twelve of the thirty-four students in the current session leads the list of fifteen nations represented at the Graduate School. The Ecumenical Institute was started in October, 1946, as a place to train leadership for the ecumenical movement. Aside from the Graduate School, its major emphasis is on the training of the laity.

Conferences on a wide variety of subjects will bring laity from many different nations and church traditions to Bossey in the coming year.

Growth of the World Council of Churches

Dr. Visser 't Hooft, noted that the World Council of Churches had grown from the fifty churches which participated in the provisional organization in 1946 to 165 Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox churches from some fifty nations which are engaged in the work of the Council today.

In 1956 three churches applied for membership. They are the Baptist Church of Hungary; the Church of the Province of Central Africa (Anglican); and the La Plata Synod in South America (Lutheran), an autonomous church in Argentina and Paraguay which maintains contact with the Evangelical Church in Germany.

But in commenting on the Council's growth, the general secretary emphasized that "By our very nature we are in the strict sense a service agency and we must resist every move toward making the Council a centralized executive body apart from the churches which compose it."

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Dr. Visser 't Hooft mentioned that in 1956 the meeting of the Executive Committee in Australia and the Central Committee in Hungary gave the Council opportunity to come into close contact with churches in its membership "not only the leadership but with their congregations and members."

On the subject of "grass roots" participation, he said it varied widely but that there is "a constantly growing army of those in whose Christian life participation in the ecumenical movement has become a spiritual fact and necessity."

Ahead in 1957

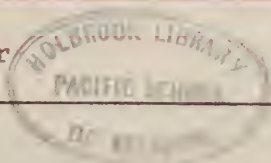
On the immediate agenda of the World Council of Churches is the meeting of the Executive Committee in Geneva, February 4-8, 1957. Here the business of the coming year will be discussed in detail.

What of the relations with the Russian Orthodox Churches which have been the subject of discussion at the last two Central Committee meetings? What of the resolution passed at last summer's meeting which called for a visit of World Council of Churches representatives to churches within the People's Republic of China "whenever such a visit would be welcome"? These are concerns of the Executive Committee.

The place of the 1960 Assembly of the World Council of Churches, now thought to be Ceylon and most certainly to be somewhere in Asia, and the plans for the next Assembly are things which will occupy the attention of the World Council leaders in the coming year.

And as Dr. Leslie Cooke, director of the World Council of Churches Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, has warned, the solution of the Hungarian refugee problem will by no means be the end of the refugee problem. How the churches can sustain the large financial program necessary to care for the needs of homeless people across the world will again engage the attention of the churches in 1957.

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Moscow Church Asks Postponement of Meeting with WCC Officers

At the request of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, the meeting of representatives of the Orthodox Church of Russia with representatives of the World Council of Churches, which was to have taken place in the vicinity of Paris at the end of January, has been postponed.

The Patriarchate has stated that its representatives need more time to prepare for the meeting. There will now be a further exchange of correspondence about a new date for the meeting.

In the correspondence between the World Council and the Moscow Patriarchate after the Second Assembly of the WCC in 1954, reference had been made to the desirability of a meeting between delegates of the Patriarchate and the Council. A specific proposal for the conversations was made in March, 1956, by the Metropolitan Nikolai, head of the office of foreign relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, to Dr. Franklin Clark Fry of the USA, chairman of the World Council's Central Committee. Dr. Fry was visiting Moscow with a group of American churchmen. The Metropolitan told Dr. Fry that the Russian Church, which has not joined the world body, "did not refuse to revise its attitude to the World Council of Churches" and wanted a discussion of common concerns.

E.P.S., Geneva

United States
(New York)

World Council of Churches Begins Race Relations Project

A new research project on problems of inter-racial relations will be under-taken by Dr. J. Oscar Lee for the World Council of Churches. The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA is making available the services of Dr. Lee, executive director of the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations of the National Council.

Dr. Lee left on January 14 for a three-month visit which will take him to Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Kenya, Pakistan, India, Ceylon and Malaya. He will meet in each place those most active in the struggle for improved race relations.

At each center, Dr. Lee will try to discover how far the experience gained in America can be applied and how far methods used elsewhere can be used in the United States. He will try to discover how the World Council of Churches could give more help to those working in the field.

Dr. Lee will prepare a report of his findings for the 90-member Central Committee of the World Council of Churches which will meet at Yale University School in August 1957.

The World Council of Churches at Evanston, in 1954, urged the churches within the World Council membership to "renounce all forms of segregation or discrimination and to work for their abolition within their own life and within society."

The study project is being aided by a grant of \$3500 from the Fund for the Republic to the United States Conference for the World Council of Churches. E.P.S., Geneva

CZECHOSLOVAKIAHromadka's View of the Hungarian Crisis

(Prague) - In the course of a long statement analyzing the Hungarian crisis, Professor Joseph Hromadka of the Comenius Theological Faculty in Prague, has declared that "even those Hungarians who were genuinely interested in a redress of the mistakes, sins and errors, recognize that the intervention of the Soviet Army on November 4, 1956, saved the Hungarians from terrible bloodshed and disintegration, and furthermore from national, chauvinist and social reaction, which could have taken the first step in Hungary toward a broader military conflict in Central Europe and perhaps in Europe in general."

The statement appears in a special issue of the official information service of the Protestant Churches in Czechoslovakia. Dr. Hromadka says he makes it "hesitatingly" and "at the request" of his "friends and brothers abroad who directly asked him for his opinion."

Professor Hromadka acknowledges the difficulty of judging the rights and wrongs of the Hungarian situation. He says that "the beginnings of the events in Hungary were connected with the sincere desire of numberless citizens, members of the Workers Party, intellectuals, and especially students, to surmount the internal shortcomings of the Hungarian society at a faster rate." He says:

"October 2nd evidently expressed the endeavours of Hungarian citizens for a tranquil, but rapid, redress of the situation and for the inauguration of a better policy. How did the catastrophe come about? It will be a long time still before we get to know all the details of that day and the following days and before we penetrate to the reasons for the violent and tragic upheaval. Evidently the most responsible representatives of Hungarian political sphere lost their heads and were not able to estimate what was actually happening. They were too deeply isolated from the masses and from intellectuals. They hastily asked for the aid of Soviet military units, hastily called them off and lost their perspective of events. From the very beginning, however, there were voices - besides those calling for a peaceful and organic redress - which raised slogans tinged with fascist nationalism, slogans expressing what had been suppressed for ten years, but which had been fermenting as a hang-over from the Hungary which had fallen in 1945."

Referring to the Church situation, Dr. Hromadka writes that "the Hungarian events also shook the leadership of the Hungarian Protestant churches. Evidently not all was in order in them. And redress was necessary."

Pointing out that approval of needed change in the church does not imply approval of all the political events that went with it, Dr. Hromadka continued: "...We do not want to be unjust, but we shall not join the expressions of joy over the 'great day' in which the office of Bishop was returned to former dignitaries while thousands of people were murdered and the banner of social and political nationalism was raised on high."

E.P.S., Geneva

U.S.S.R.Moscow Patriarch Replies to German Leaders

Patriarch Alexius of Moscow and all Russia describes the report of the deportation of Hungarian citizens to the USSR as "false", in a letter replying to Dr. Heinrich Held of Düsseldorf and Dr. Ernst Wilm of Bielefeld.

In their letter the two churchmen had asked the Russian Orthodox Patriarch to urge his government "to ensure that no deportations take place, and that no hardships are inflicted in the political struggle."

In reply Patriarch Alexius writes: "Dear Brethren in the Lord, You urge us to petition our government to stop deporting Hungarian citizens to the USSR. We can only explain your request by assuming that you must have received a false report. We feel obliged to draw your attention to the repeated official declarations of the Soviet delegates at the Eleventh Assembly of the United Nations Organization concerning the unfounded charges of inhuman treatment made against the Soviet Union."

Concerning the attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church to "the tragic events in Egypt and Hungary," the Patriarch Alexius writes: "We are deeply disturbed just as you are, dear brethren, by the sufferings of the peoples in these countries and we pray continually that the Lord may bless them and give them peace (Psalm 29: 11). We are glad to hear of the efforts made by the peoples of those countries to re-establish normal peaceful conditions. But we realize the difficulties by which they are faced. In the

effort to relieve the distress of the Egyptian and Hungarian peoples, the Russian Orthodox Church has made its small contribution, and it has also helped with reconstruction. We are sure that your churches have also responded to the appeal to help Egypt and Hungary." E.P.S., Geneva

SWEDEN

Parliament Initiates Inquiry on Church-State Relations

After a lively debate lasting ten hours the Swedish Parliament has authorized the setting up of a Parliamentary Commission to present an "impartial" report on future relationships between Church and State.

The formula for the Commission's establishment emphasizes that it should not prejudge its conclusion. The Parliament has thus not fallen into line with earlier attempts, such as those made in Spring 1956, by the present Swedish Ambassador in Oslo, Rolf Edberg, to conduct inquiry with a view to separation of State and Church.

The terms of reference of the Commission, which was not supported by the Parliamentary Minority of the Conservative Party and the Farmers' Party, include study of religious instruction in schools, theological studies, religious property rights, the function of Clergy as public registrars, funeral arrangements and the salaries and pensions of government servants in offices for ecclesiastical affairs. E.P.S., Geneva

SWITZERLAND

(Geneva)

Divinity School Appointment for W.C.C. Faith and Order Secretary

The secretary of the World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order, Dr. J. Robert Nelson, has accepted the invitation of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn., to become dean of its Divinity School. He will assume his new responsibilities in September 1957, after carrying through several important Faith and Order conferences in America during the summer.

Dr. Nelson was elected by the Commission on Faith and Order to be its secretary following the Lund Conference, 1952. Since he began his work in Geneva in 1953, the work of Faith and Order has been extended by the establishment of eight continuing theological commissions as well as special conferences and study commissions on Christian unity in various countries.

The Divinity School of Vanderbilt University is a prominent non-denominational school. Last year it was granted the sum of three million dollars by the Sealantic Fund of the Rockefeller family for further development. Announcement of Dr. Nelson's appointment was made by Chancellor Harvie Branscomb of the University. E.P.S., Geneva

SWITZERLAND

(Geneva)

Visser 't Hooft Visits North Africa

In December Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, general Secretary of the World Council of Churches, visited the churches in Algeria and Tunisia which are related to the World Council. He gave lectures on the ecumenical movement in Oran, Algiers, Constantine, Bone and Tunis.

On the occasion of his visit an ecumenical service was held in Tunis with the participation of the Greek Orthodox, Anglican, Methodist (Arab-speaking) and French Reformed churches.

Dr. Visser 't Hooft also attended a number of conferences of pastors and church councillors at which the specific responsibilities of the Christian Church in the present critical situation in North Africa were discussed. The main point to which the discussions returned again and again was what the churches can do to bridge the gulf between the Christian and the Moslem communities.

Dr. Visser 't Hooft visited the leaders of the various religious communities in Algiers and Tunis. In Tunis, where on January 1 the new legislation took effect which abolishes the special Moslem courts and the practice of polygamy, he discussed questions of religious liberty with a number of government leaders and was assured that the government accepted the principles laid down in the UN Declaration of Human Rights. E.P.S., Geneva

INDONESIA

East Java Church is Twenty-five Years Old

The Christian Church of East Java, which celebrated its twenty-fifth birthday in December, has almost doubled its adult membership since it achieved autonomy in 1931.

In 1931 adults in the church numbered 11,891 by comparison with 22,783 in 1955. Children in 1931 numbered 11,013 by comparison with 19,357 in 1955.

The East Java Church is one of the most important mission areas among Moslems. In 1931 it enrolled 176 converts from Islam. The number enrolled had risen to 605 in 1955.

After pioneering efforts by a Eurasian farmer and a German watchmaker in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Christian mission in East Java preserved its lay emphasis. Dr. Hendrik Kraemer, a layman, who was later the first director of the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches, was referred to during the recent celebrations as "the midwife who assisted at the birth of the East Java Church."

The festivities associated with the special meeting of the synod to mark the anniversary included dramatic and musical performances reminiscent of the indigenous wayang "shadow plays" of Java.

E.P.S., Geneva

SWITZERLAND

The Oldest Manuscript of the Gospel of St. John

The papyrus Bodmer II, which contains the oldest known manuscript of the first four chapters of the Gospel of St. John, has now been published by the Bodmer Library in Geneva.

The editor, Professor Victor Martin of the University of Geneva, says in his introduction that the experts who have studied the reproductions of this codex are agreed that according to the paleographical evidence this manuscript was written at the beginning of the third century or possibly about 200 A.D. Thus this papyrus is probably a full century older than the other manuscripts which give the full text of St. John (i.e. the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus).

This important new text will now have to be studied by the specialists in textual criticism. The general impression which the manuscript makes is that it differs from the known manuscripts at many points in matters of ordering of the words or of style, but that there are few or no variations of substance.

Parts of the manuscript of other chapters have been found and will also be published by the Bodmer Library.

E.P.S., Geneva

UNITED STATES

Four Lutheran Churches Take Steps Toward Union

Four Lutheran church bodies with a combined membership of 2,861,000 agreed during December to merge into a single church.

Forty-two commissioners of the four groups voted unanimously to proceed with plans for organic union after agreeing that "no serious doctrinal differences separated them."

They constituted themselves a Joint Commission on Lutheran Unity and directed a steering committee to prepare blueprints for the new body and report at the next Commission meeting on March 8.

The new body will be the largest Lutheran Church in the United States. Next in size with 2,076,379 members is the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, which has so far remained aloof from all union moves.

The merger will include the 2,270,000-member United Lutheran Church in America, the 536,000-member Augustana Lutheran Church, the 35,000-member Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (Suomi Synod), and the 20,000-member American Evangelical Lutheran Church.

E.P.S., Geneva

The Ecumenical Review

Articles in the current issue of the Ecumenical Review, quarterly publication of the World Council of Churches, deal with the images used in the Bible to describe the church. After an introduction to the subject by Dr. J. Robert Nelson, executive secretary of the World Council's Commission on Faith and Order, Father Gabriel Hebert of the Society of the Sacred Mission writes on "The Body", the Rev. Ernest Best from a different vantage point on the same subject, Bishop Cassian of the Orthodox Institute of Theology in Paris on "The Family of God", Professor J. B. Soucek of Czechoslovakia on "The Shepherd" and Professor N. A. Dahl of Norway on "The People of God".

The "Ecumenical Chronicle" gives the text of statements by World Council officers on the Hungarian and Suez crises, a statement on the study of areas of rapid social change, a document on the future of ecumenical work camps and an extended note by Leon Sauthier of the Old Catholic Church in Switzerland on the 25th anniversary of inter-communion between Anglican and Old Catholic Churches. There is a comment on the Ninth World Methodist Conference held recently in the United States.

"World Council Diary" discusses the role of the ecumenical movement in crises such as those in Hungary and Suez. Book reviews appear as usual. E.P.S., Geneva

The International Review of Missions

Field consultations in a number of areas have enabled the editors of the International Review of Missions to vary the form in which they survey the year's developments in their January issue, by securing from some leaders in the Christian mission their impressions derived from visits to particular areas of service in one region or another.

Dr. Norman Goodall, who recently visited the Middle East, gives his "Reflections on the Near and Middle East". In "Currents in the South Pacific", the Rev. E. V. Newman considers changes and influences in a previously isolated part of the world. The Rev. A. A. Beetham, who has served in Africa, contributes a study in "The Church in Africa since 1957", of the problems and tasks of independence and self-government. In "Protestant Latin America: Sight and Insight", Mr. Alberto Rembao, editor of "La Nueva Democracia", gives a picture of the Evangelical Church. The Rev. Frank Short records contacts and insights gained in an extensive tour of Asia.

Other articles include Dr. Horace M. McMullen's "Spiritual Aspects of the Plight of the Arab Refugees", based on attendance at the second Beirut Conference; "The Training of Men Missionaries", by the Rev. H. D. Northfield; and the Rev. A. H. Dammers' article based on recent experience in South India, of "The Vocation to Short Service in the Church Overseas".

There are field reports and a summary of some of the year's developments in the Missions of the Roman Catholic Church. E.P.S., Geneva

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

"What is the nature of the unity we seek?" asks the 1957 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity leaflet issued by the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. The Week of Prayer is from January 18-25.

In answering the question concerning the nature of the unity we seek, the leaflet says: "It is the unity which God wills...But how do we know His will? We know in part, but we pray for the coming of that which is perfect. The perfect unity of Christians is the unity of the Father and Son. If Jesus Christ Himself was moved to pray for this manifestation of unity in the Church, how much more ought we to pray!"

The publication of the Faith and Order Commission comments on the growth of prayer for unity during this period by "more and more Christians of many separate churches and confessions." When this time proves inconvenient, they choose Pentecost or another time. And many continue this practice of prayer for unity in their daily worship throughout the year." E.P.S., Geneva

